PEREZ QUITS DC!

#104

FROM WAR OF THE GODS TO A WAR OF WILLS — **GEORGE PEREZ** LAYS DOWN THE LAW!

PLUS: WHAT'S NEW WITH **WOLVERINE!**

FROM TONY THE TIGER TO MARVEL: **TED BOONTHANAKIT** TOP ARTIST TELLS WHAT'S IN WORKS

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

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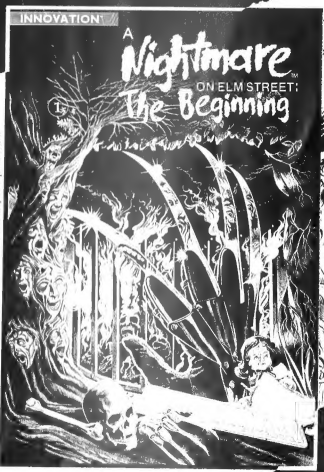

... BUT WERE *AFRAID* TO ASK!

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it is to fear

SLAMBO AND ED-FORD
black and white and rode all over

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cover painting by:
TED BOONTHANAKIT
how 'bout it? you scratch my back — and I'll scratch yours!

UP FRONT

In the issues leading up to #100, I asked for responses to a survey about COMICS INTERVIEW magazine. To my delight, a deluge of constructive criticism and creative feedback resulted. A representative selection of those responses appears here:

If I Could Change or Re-Arrange CI I'd —

"Make it more readily available. The last time **Byrne** was interviewed, that issue came and went. I never even saw it, and I go to my comic store every Thursday (that's when comics come in)."

"Return to the policy of interviewing letterers and colorists and the like. These people never receive the attention they deserve. I'd also like the interviews to be a little longer."

"I would put never-published artwork and I would talk at least a little about how the guy broke in the comics field."

"So far you guys are doing fine."

"Longer in-depth interviews with my favorite writers and artists. A forum for discussion on the comic-book industry as a whole and more input from the fans, like a longer letter column."

"When you have a photograph of an artist or writer, why not have his/her signature below."

"A little face lift. Nothing drastic, as the layout *works* as it is! Avoid large pieces of art, particularly enlarged from pencil. Example? Pages 26 and 27 of #96; these storyboards don't really need to be this large to see them nicely. A 'good' example: pages 12 and 13; George's detail in the pencils gives this huge spread a fine look. Expand the letters to two or three pages. Keep the newsprint; high-quality paper is not needed, as the readability of the text is fine right now. And any important issues can get the Super Special treatment, anyhow."

"Make more room for letters. I like to hear what people across the country have to say. I'd also add a section that features the work of new comic-book artists, guys who just broke into the business."

"Include more coverage of European, Japanese, and other non-English language comics, introduce a more designed look to the magazine, and go for more interviews of all-time greats rather than so much emphasis on the latest Marvel or DC hacks."

"More issues devoted totally to a big-name artist. Your **Frazetta** issue was great!"

"Bring back interviewing letterers, colorists and the fan-on-the-street. I've always been excited by the fact that this is an interview book where you're able to get anyone's views on comics with little censorship or editorializing."

"Make the letters page a little longer, keep the quotes at the top, take away the border around the page."

"Would like to see more interviews, less art (or at least art which is reduced more — in size)."

"I don't think you guys should really change anything."

Next Issue: ***The long-awaited answers to the COMICS INTERVIEW 100 Quiz!***

— Dave

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"I enjoyed THE X-MEN, but I was never a die-hard fan."

TED BOONTHANAKIT

As yet unscheduled, but lurking somewhere in the future to spring upon readers in the pages of MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS, is a multi-part Wolverine adventure drawn in whole or in part by none other than Ted B. Avid enthusiasts of independent comics may remember Ted's eyecatching art from MICRA, a few years ago, and wonder what he's been doing in the meanwhile. Read on, for the answer may amaze you (his work is often right before your very eyes!) — and one of these days his comics art will return on one of Marvel's major characters . . .

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT: *Let's go back to your origins, which are shrouded in mystery on the dark continent — where were you when you read your first Marvel comic?*

TED BOONTHANAKIT: Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

DAK: *How old were you?*

TED: Ten.

DAK: *What was your first Marvel comic?*

TED: It was THE AVENGERS.

DAK: *Did you read THE X-MEN back then?*

TED: I believe there were a few, but the books that were drawn by **John Buscema** were the ones that mainly caught my attention.

DAK: *Is that when you decided that you were going to draw comics?*

TED: Well, it sort of evolved later on, as I was becoming more and more interested in art. I would sort of fall back on these comics as a reference source, and I would try to emulate **John Buscema.** Then I realized that I actually enjoyed doing these characters, and I was hoping that one day I would draw a comic — never quite really knowing how it was going to come about.

DAK: *Then you moved to the States and I ended up publishing MICRA — which you pencilled and inked. Just as comics have footnotes, we can refer the readers here to the interview that we did way back in INTERVIEW #49 for the full story. Anyway, I remember when we were first discussing MICRA, you said that you'd be very happy if your work just got out there where people could see it, because you felt that your art would speak for itself and good things would result. And you are now working on a WOLVERINE story?*

TED: That's right!

DAK: *Were you familiar with him as a character?*

TED: As much as most readers, I'm sure. I enjoyed THE X-MEN, but I was never a die-hard fan. When Wolverine became a *major* popular character I sort of neglected to follow his, you know, climb to popularity. Before long I realized that he was it, he was the thing that's carrying Marvel more or less. But by then he was being drawn by some of the best-known artists in the field, so I never thought that I would have a go at him.

DAK: *It's a pretty interesting jump — from MICRA, to today's mainstream comic-book audience probably an obscure black-and-white comic from four or five years ago — to your next comics assignment, doing WOLVERINE for Marvel.*

"Mick Jagger . . . Very unassuming personality,

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wasn't as ugly as I thought he would be. *(Laughter.)*"

TED: I would say! *(Laughter.)* And, of course, my thanks to you, who got me in touch with **Dwight Zimmerman**, who was editing MICRA and will be writing the Wolverine story. Dwight and I have often talked about — well, he's always mentioned how he enjoyed my work and would like to see me on a more mainstream character, and I've often wondered how my style would work on the more mainstream books.

DAK: *Are you making any changes in the way that you approach the storytelling?*

TED: I'm playing it by ear; I'm just sort of letting it *evolve*. I would hate to try to be something that I'm not, so I'm hoping that as I do it a hint of my style will come through and people will recognize it as something different — but enjoyable enough to follow.

DAK: *Well, we've touched on the comic-book side of your art, but there's a whole other side of your art that, I'm tempted to say, is unseen by comic-book readers — except that's probably not the way to put it, since unbeknownst to them they probably have seen a lot of it! I'm thinking, of course, of the Kellogg's cereal boxes.*

TED: And the numerous television commercials they see every day.

DAK: *Let's go over some of that. What are some of the things that people might be familiar with — but not realize are your work?*

TED: My biggest clients? Well, obviously, being from Atlanta, Coca-Cola would be one of them, would be in the forefront. *Enormous* suppliers as far as projects are concerned, I'm one of the thousands of artists who are doing advertising things for them. Some of the other notable TV commercials would be the U.S.M.C. spots, Orkin —

DAK: *Which Orkin commercials would they be?*

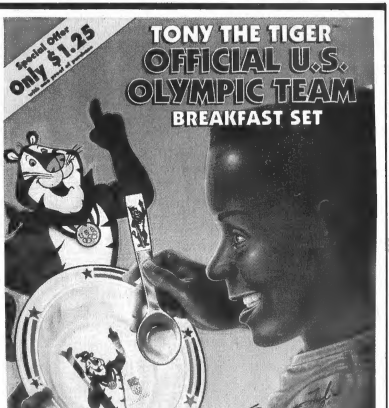
TED: The ones with the robot; he's called "the Terminator" but he's more like the Transformers, and he goes around hunting bugs. I've worked on a number of those.

DAK: *And what exactly are you doing on them?*

TED: Storyboarding.

DAK: *You work out the angles and tell the story — and they film from that?*

TED: Exactly, yeah. Sometimes the advertising agencies have already developed them precisely frame by frame, but there are times when I personally take things into my own hands and change things as I feel they should be — in order to catch the more dramatic angles or lighting or such.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APT/LOT/SPACE #
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
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DAK: *When they film or animate these things, do they follow your storyboards very closely?*

TED: Fairly closely. Sometimes they, too, embellish as they see fit, according to budget and time.

DAK: *Also, you have been doing some movie storyboarding recently, right?*

TED: Yes, three in the Atlanta area, major feature productions. The first was a small production that has already been released and gone from the theaters, by **Michael Schultz,** of **Carwash.** It was originally called THE TAPE OF DEXTER JACKSON but was released with the title changed to LIVING LARGE. *(Laughter.)* For whatever reason. Soon after that came a bigger production, called FREEJACK, which hasn't hit the theaters yet.

DAK: *That's with good old Mick Lips, isn't it?*

TED: With **Mick Jagger,** yes. *(Laughter.)* And with **Anthony Hopkins,** who flew into Atlanta right after that movie with **Jodie Foster.**

DAK: *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS?*

TED: Yeah. As soon as he was done with that he flew to Atlanta and began shooting FREEJACK.

DAK: *Did you get to meet Mick?*

TED: Not personally, but I went to watch some of the filming and saw him around. Very unassuming personality, wasn't *as* ugly as I thought he would be. *(Laughter.)*

DAK: *And who is the director on that one?*

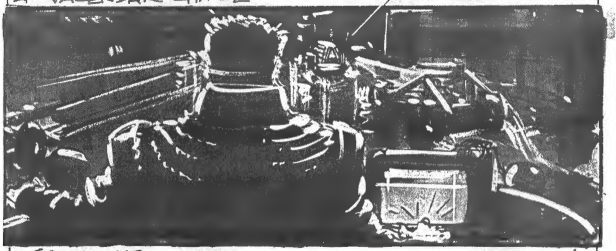
TED: Let me see . . . **Geoff Murphy,** of

1

FREEJACK C/U VACENDAK ATDP PERSONNEL CARRIER

2 'VACENDAK CHASE'

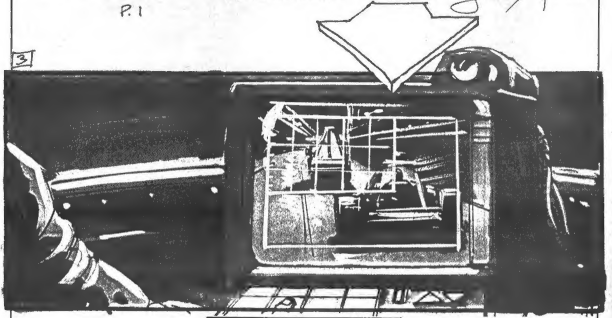
ALEX

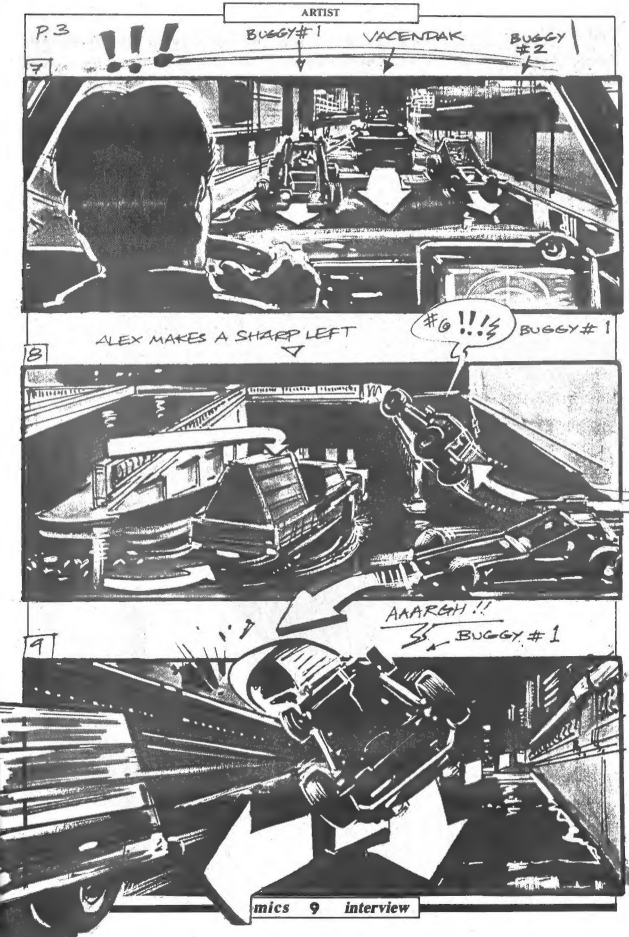


SCENE 119
P.1

VACENDAK Punching key pad.

3




ARTIST
P. 3
!!!
BUGGY#1
VACENDAK
BUGGY #2
7
ALEX MAKES A SHARP LEFT
#6 !!!
BUGGY # 1
8
AAARGH!!
BUGGY # 1
9

"In comics, you employ a lot of dynamic and over-

Young Guns II.

DAK: *I'm a little puzzled by why a major motion picture would book the space and pay all those people to come on location to a city such as Atlanta and, at that point, start to look around for somebody to do storyboarding. Seems more logical that they would come readily equipped with their own storyboards . . .*

TED: Simply put, we didn't have the restrictions of the union here in Atlanta as much as they do in New York City or in Hollywood.

DAK: *What kind of restrictions?*

TED: Well, not so much restrictions as much as, you know, they're not confined by the different rules and regulations that come with working with union members.

DAK: *So, you'll work around the clock, that sort of thing?* (Laughter.)

TED: I'll work around the clock, yes. And I'll work well. The union dictates how much you should get paid; I, in turn, feel that I can charge as much as I like, above and beyond whatever. I'm not governed by any union regulations.

DAK: *You can charge what the market will bear?*

TED: Yes. And I did precisely that — and they didn't even seem to blink.

DAK: *You said there were three movies?*

TED: Yes, the most recent one I did is called FRIED GREEN TOMATOES. An odd-sounding name but it's a very *charming* script directed by **Jon Avnet.** This is his first time directing; he's really a producer. But he's complained of having run into some extremely temperamental directors — so he said he was going to do it himself. We don't know how it's going to come out, but the script was *extremely* charming and if it's done well it should be quite a hit.

DAK: *Do you find any similarities in your approach to storyboarding and your approach to comics?*

TED: Not so much, except for the exaggerated expressions and dynamic movements you see in comics — beyond that, you have to take into consideration angles, lighting, and you have to remember that movie storyboards in general are very loose and are kept minimal. They don't require great detail because of the large number of frames that you have to do per movie. There's really no need to spend a lot of time on each one of them because there really *isn't* a lot of time.

DAK: *And that's different when you're doing comics?*

TED: I would think that you spend a little bit more time, at least if you are a penciller, spend as much time as is *necessary* to get your style across, and to make it easier for the inker to take over from there.

DAK: *You said that you* don't *really see a lot of similarities in the storytelling approach —?*

TED: The similarity is there, but in comics you employ a lot of dynamic and over-exaggerated linework and movement, whereas in storyboarding for movies and commercials you don't need to do that as pronouncedly.

DAK: *So, if you were storyboarding this very same Wolverine adventure as a movie you would probably approach it differently?*

TED: Slightly differently. Placement is more important in storyboarding; where would the camera be *precisely?* The cinematographer will have to follow your frames very precisely. But there's no need for linework, that's not of main importance. It's the *placement* that's more important.

DAK: *Do you live in fear of what will happen with an inker?*

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exaggerated linework and in storyboarding you don't."

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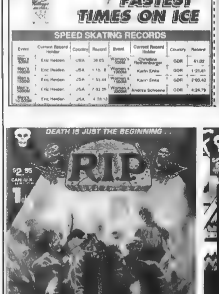
"Commercial artwork isn't too dissimilar to comic books."



TED: I do, as a matter of fact. *(Laughter.)* Yes, I do. I would hope that I would get someone who is fairly good

DAK: *Compatible?*

TED: Compatible, yes.

DAK: *I know you inked MICRA yourself, and you do most of your commercial work with, what, markers?*

TED: Markers, yes.

DAK: *I guess it's not a routine occurrence for you to turn your pencils over to someone else for finishing — and not really know what they're going to come out like?*

TED: No. I've heard some horror stories; as a matter of fact, you have, too! *(Laughter.)* Where the finished comics were not quite what they were originally menat to be, supposed to be.

DAK: *Well, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Kellogg's cereal boxes because, after all, you get to draw that cultural paragon, Tony the Tiger.*

TED: *(Laughter.)*

DAK: *What did you say the print run was on the two that I saw, 75 or 80 million?*

TED: I know for a fact that the one with the speed skater had a 72,000,000 print run.

DAK: *Wow! Now, if you could just work out a royalty!* (Laughter.)

TED: Yes, wouldn't that be nice.

DAK: *That's on everybody's supermarket shelves?*

TED: Should be, right about now.

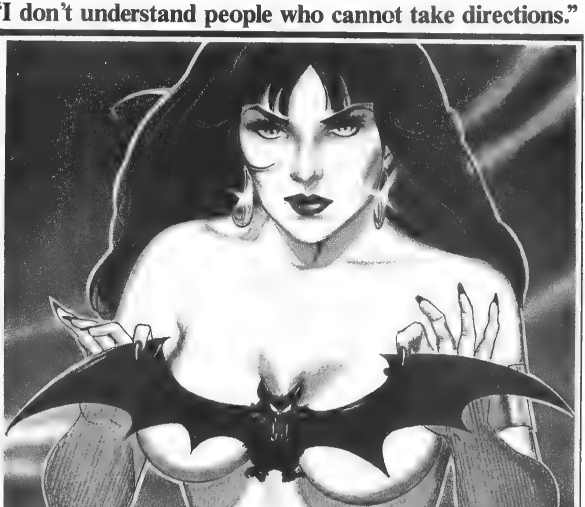
DAK: *They don't let you sign that type of work, though, do they?*

TED: No., they don't. It's one of those things with big corporations.

DAK: *It's interesting to me that a lot of people have evolved out of comics* towards *commercial art — it has been said by John Buscema and a lot of others that some very talented artists had to get into commercial work because they couldn't really afford to stay in comics. Yet you're coming from the other side, from storyboarding movies and doing commercials and cereal boxes and things for Coca-Cola, to comics — you're trying to fit comics into your schedule.*

TED: Well, I'm sure doing commercial artwork is not dissimilar to those who do comic books — where you do nothing but sit at your table and draw and draw and draw all day long. I work approximately 20 hours a day, for example, and it gets to the point where you would like to at least have a variety, you would like to try something new. And hopefully fairly successful. Comics is something that I've always wanted to delve into, and at this point I shouldn't really predict the

"I don't understand people who cannot take directions."



success — I'm just *grateful* to be able to do it, especially to get to do a character like Wolverine. I just want to enjoy it.

DAK: *Is Marvel going to let you paint the covers?*

TED: I don't know. I've not mentioned it to Dwight. I would *love* to!

DAK: *Were you serious when you said that you work, on the average, 20 hours a day?*

TED: Yes.

DAK: *There's no exaggeration in there?*

"There are so many hungry artists out there

TED: No exaggeration — no. That's it.

DAK: *How do you do this? Massive injections of speed?*

TED: Caffeine. *(Laughter.)* Good old caffeine, never fails.

DAK: *How long can you sustain that kind of a schedule?*

TED: Well, it's been an ongoing thing for about five years now.

DAK: *But you take plenty of vacations, right?*

TED: I do that, yes. I think — if I didn't — I would not be here speaking to you right now. *(Laughter.)* It's not like I'm complaining, because there are people out there who are crying because there's not enough work. And I'm not a workaholic, don't get me wrong; I work because there's work to be done, the work's there, and if I don't then I would probably end up just walking around the house and not doing much of anything else.

DAK: *A lot of the creative people doing comics have trouble taking direction, they don't like to be directed by an editor or an art director, and there's a lot of behind-the-scenes rivalry and friction. And yet you deal all the time with commercial accounts, where much is dictated as to how you're going to do things.*

TED: I've never been able to understand people who cannot take directions. All your life you must take direction, some way or another, and I don't have any problem with that — if I am paid in full what I charge the clients. It's *their* project. You don't have much of a right to decide, and if you don't like it, you keep it to yourself — or if you are really *adamant* against something, then you don't do it. It is their project, it's not yours, and you're being paid to do it. I do it because I *want* to do it.

DAK: *Do you have the same feeling about comic-book work?*

TED: I. . . it would be the same. I would do the best that I could, and I hope that, eventually - if I keep up the good work — good things will come of it. But I don't think that I should be the one dictating *anything* at this point. Wolverine is not my character and Dwight is the one who is writing the story.

DAK: *Is the commercial money really so much more than comic-book money for the amount of time that you spend? Does that make it difficult to find time in your schedule to do the comics?*

TED: There's so much more money in the commercial business, and it's so much quicker. That makes it . . . I mean, if you want to have a lifestyle, and if you have already established a certain lifestyle, it's very difficult to suddenly walk away from that for any amount of time because you're not sure if you can come back and fall into the same groove. There are so many hungry artists out there who are just *dying* to jump into your place and take over, and the commercial market is one where there is no loyalty. They know you by your work — but they don't know you as *who* you are. We often deal through representatives or by phone or through the fax machine, and there's no human involvement there. So I've hung in here working 20 hours a day in order to keep up this relationship, so as not to create a gap — because the money's very good but at the same time it may not always be here.

DAK: *I wonder if you've considered easing the workload by having assistants?*

TED: Well, I've had one or two, on and off, depending on the workload. There's always the thought in the back of my mind that — one of these days — I'm going to have to go into it in a big way, not fall into a trap of working too hard for a limited amount of income. I can't keep up this sort of schedule forever, sooner or later my body's going to quit, so I really have been in a mild dilemma for the last few months. But I'm sure that'll work out. Comics is sort of a diversion for me right now.

DAK: *Given all the differences in time and money, could you afford to devote more time to comics?*

TED: Well, I would hope that it could lead to something bigger, given enough time and exposure.

DAK: *You hope that you can command enough attention that you will make a name for yourself?*

TED: Yes.

who are just *dying* to jump into your place."

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DAK: *If you had your choice of any character at Marvel — which one would you pick?*
TED: I've always enjoyed the Black Widow.
DAK: *That's an unusual choice!* (Laughter.)
TED: Those who are familiar with MICRA will know I enjoy drawing female characters, and I've always liked the Black Widow and I think she has such wonderful potential.

"Comics is a sort of diversion for me right now."

DAK: *Do you look at comics now? Do you get time in the other four hours that you have to sleep and have a life to keep up with comics?*

TED: Well, obviously not as much as I would like to! I've managed to look through some, the latest from **Jim Lee,** and one of my other favorites is — I don't know if I should say this, it's not even a Marvel book — CRYING FREEMAN.

DAK: *That's translated from Japanese?*

TED: Exactly, yes.

DAK: *Is it the art that interests you or the story?*

TED: It's both. You know, the way the Japanese do things is *quite* different from the American books, and I enjoy that very much, although there are some rather explicit situations that you don't get to see that much in American comics.

DAK: *Sexual or violent?*

TED: Sexually, certainly — actually, both. But the way they treat the sexual things seems to be more sort of . . . it comes very natural to them, and it seems to be an integral part of most of their stories. It *must* be there. And yet somehow we've managed to do without that in American comics. *(Laughter.)*

DAK: *Well, we don't have it in American private life, either.*

TED: Of course. *(Laughter.)*

DAK: *Are there any other comics that you look at from the different companies?*

TED: I'm a big MODESTY BLAISE person. Specifically as drawn by **Jim Holdaway,** because I grew up with his strip in Kenya. That would be one of the daily strips that I would get to read, MODESTY BLAISE and JAMES BOND.

DAK: *Here in the States, the only place that you can get the new MODESTY BLAISE strip is in COMICS REVUE, which I publish. You did a cover painting of Modesty for one issue.*

TED: That's true.

DAK: *Well, is there anything that we haven't touched on about comics that you want to say?*

TED: Well, I think it's only prudent that I give my appreciation to **Lamar Waldron** for noticing me and giving me the chance with MICRA. That's where it all really started.

DAK: *And, in fact, there is a question that I'm sure there are readers wanting me to ask — whatever happened to MICRA? Are you going to finish it?*

TED: It will be finished eventually, yes. We've talked about it. How, when and where? The mystery will have to be continued. *(Laughter.)*

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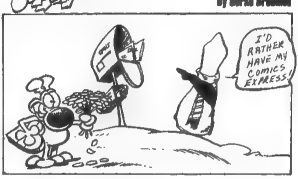

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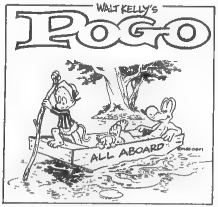

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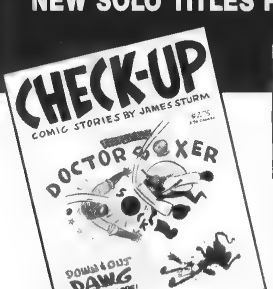

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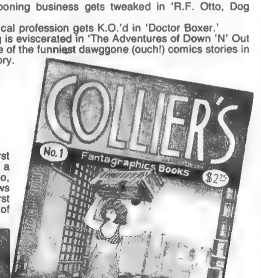

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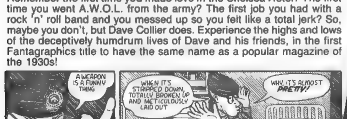

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"I overcommitted, which is not unusual for me."

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WAR OF THE GODS™

PATRICK DANIEL O'NEIL: *Once again, DC seems to be struggling with its schedule — and, in this case, struggling with something that it shouldn't've had to: When you're presenting a major crossover, there shouldn't be a problem, but things are coming out of sequence. There has been some talk that in some way you were responsible.*

GEORGE PEREZ: As far as being responsible, I guess some of it was my fault. I overcommitted, which is not unusual for me, but I hope that won't happen again. As is the case when you overcommit you tell one person you have plenty of time to do something while other things continue to pile up. You then start putting things off and then suddenly everything is due at the same time. Any delays on my part are certainly my fault although it had much more of an effect on INFINITY GAUNTLET than it actually should have had on WAR OF THE GODS. INFINITY GAUNTLET took longer to physically do than WAR OF THE GODS.

WAR OF THE GODS was a book

"The original reason for WAR OF THE GODS was to

commemorate the 50th anniversary of Wonder Woman."

that was cursed from day one. If I was the only person to blame, I would take the blame, because I've done it before. Unfortunately, there is plenty of blame to go around, and DC has had its fair share this time, particularly when you consider that the WAR OF THE GODS initial proposal was submitted January of 1990. It took DC a few months to just get around to *reading* it. The original title for the series was HOLY WAR back then, but of course we went to war in the gulf so I changed that.

Initially, the original reason for WAR OF THE GODS' existence was to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Wonder Woman. One of the things DC did was negate that reason of existence for the story — which really annoyed me, because that was why I agreed to do WAR OF THE GODS to begin with!

Because of delays on DC's part, a lot of things snowballed. We ended up with the problem of **John Byrne's** Captain Marvel. DC looked at my synopsis and John's synopsis, and never putting two and two together that we have two completely different Captain Marvels now, gave the green light to both of them. I heard about **Byrne's** Captain Marvel from someone that said they heard him mention it at a convention. That was one of the first problems with WAR OF THE GODS.

There were other things; initially the storyline was to be a year long with WAR OF THE GODS being towards the end and the build-up being in the other books. This was to be DC's big crossover. When I found out about ARMAGEDDON 2001, well, that was another problem. I want to state right here — and this will probably look bad as far as my attitude is concerned, but it is true, I'm not about to deny it — when I get ahead of schedule on a project, one of the quickest things that will slow me down to a slow crawl is something to go wrong because of something that should have been avoided, but wasn't. When that happens I have a tantrum and I start to slow down.

WAR OF THE GODS was mine conceptually, and it was unfortunate that so many things did happen. When people comment about my slowing down I make no excuses about my emotional commitment and my emotional reaction.

With Captain Marvel, I had to rework the story as far as his involvement with the WAR OF THE GODS, because I had to make note of the Zeus connection. Plus, I had to correct something that was done incorrectly in the WHO'S WHO, where they did say that Mercury and Hermes were the same person — when I had already established in WONDER WOMAN that they were not. When I saw **John Byrne's** script for CAPTAIN MARVEL I wanted to stay as close to his version as possible; that meant rescheduling WAR OF THE GODS, so that John's CAPTAIN MARVEL could come first, so that any reference I would make would be to an already-existing CAPTAIN MARVEL. John did not want to work with anyone else on CAPTAIN MARVEL so early on, I guess. Whatever his reasons were, they were his, and he had some righteous anger on his side — as did I — because it was neither of our faults and we were both caught in the middle since DC should have told us this. Supposedly WAR OF THE GODS was rescheduled.

Now, during the course of all this, DC had been trying to get an artist on WAR OF THE GODS to work over my layouts. Unfortunately, a lot of foot-dragging went on, where they would wait to call someone or wait a month to do a follow-up phone call. If a month goes by and you don't get an answer from someone — you assume the answer is

"I wanted the 50th anniversary of Wonder Woman to

going to be no.

As for ARMAGEDDON 2001, well, that infuriated me because WAR OF THE GODS was to have been *the* crossover and now they were doing the Marvel approach and doing multiple crossovers. I felt that it took away from the uniqueness of WAR OF THE GODS — but they assured me that it was only with the annuals and not really a crossover. They described it as a continuing storyline using the annuals; I didn't like the idea because initially I wanted to use the annuals so that I didn't have to cross over into a book's regular continuity, as creators balk at the thought of crossovers. DC assured me that they would back me up on the crossovers. About a year after I had done the first proposal and a few rewrites, many of the editors had not informed any of their creators about the crossover. I personally had to call up **Marv Wolfman,** only two months before the first

Here and throughout this interview — unpublished layouts from WAR OF THE GODS by George Perez.

mean something. W.O.T.G. would be the centerpiece."

issue is supposed to get started by me, and he had no knowledge of WAR OF THE GODS! And he wasn't the only writer that was put in the situation that no one had told him.

PAT: *And Marv was in the middle of a very complicated storyline?*

GEORGE: Exactly, and he told me that if he had known earlier he would have worked it out so that more of the Titans would have been available. As it turned out, Troy was what I had to force; I had no choice; Troy was a major part of the storyline. My original synopsis showed specifically what I wanted to do with Troy, the Titans, and all of the other characters. If they had said at that point that I couldn't use the Titans I would have talked to Marv. By Marv not having any knowledge of it, that put me in a situation where I couldn't just back up and change stories that have been planned for over a year.

Marv and others were caught in a bad situation. By calling them up I was doing what editors should have done. It took DC until I was blue in the face to finally just have a meeting on WAR OF THE GODS to tell editors that they needed to cooperate on this book. This from a company that said they're really backing the book! So slowly, each and every frustration slowed me down. And I might add that at this point they were still looking for an artist.

We finally got started but started late. What they did inform me about was that since **John Byrne** didn't end up doing CAPTAIN MARVEL, the delay in schedule — the later date that we were to stick to in order to follow CAPTAIN MARVEL — was no longer there and that they had moved WAR OF THE GODS back up in the schedule again. At this point I was now a month behind and there was just so much I could get caught up on.

I had also done the cover some time ago, because I wanted them to use the first cover for promotional material. As it turned out the first cover ended up not having the same border layout as the other covers.

I wanted the fiftieth anniversary of Wonder Woman to really mean something and DC promised me that they would do something to commemorate the anniversary and that WAR OF THE GODS would be the centerpiece of that. When I saw the ad for ARMAGEDDON 2001 I was really upset because, not only was it listed as a crossover but, lo and behold, Wonder Woman was in the ad. ARMAGEDDON was only to involve books that had annuals and WONDER WOMAN didn't have an

"The fact that they decided not to advertise it as

annual this year. Plus, after my initial anger at the ARMAGEDDON series, they had assured me that it would not be a crossover and that it would not involve Wonder Woman — because she doesn't have an annual this year. No one on the WONDER WOMAN staff was informed and the first time **Karen Berger** found out about it was when I told her — after seeing the ads. That made me angry because this was something specifically promised that would not happen. That was one of the many apologies that I received.

At that point, because I was contractually bound and there were a lot of financial considerations, I couldn't leave the book. I couldn't afford to leave the book and yet that was the nail that sealed it for me and I had lost the heart for WAR OF THE GODS.

It became just a job from that point on. I thought I could handle that without getting any more emotionally involved — but DC proved me wrong again.

We had some trouble with **Cynthia Martin**, for which I will take my share of the blame. Her decision to leave the book and, as it turned out, to join military service, may have been precipitated by her not getting work regularly and, if that's so, I definitely share the blame. But, in my own defense, any time I was asked to send in work that Cynthia needed, I would get it to her on a quick turnaround. Almost anyone who works with me knows that if a person needs work right away, I will get that work to them. At that point, I was still on INFINITY GAUNTLET, so if I got delayed because of INFINITY GAUNTLET that's my fault. Therefore, Cynthia leaving the book is partially my fault; her joining the armed forces is not. I think the book ended up being too much for Cynthia to do, because there were a lot of characters and most of them she had no knowledge of; as it turned out, she's not a comics reader.

Of course, that meant we had to look all over again for an artist. Once again I had to keep checking with the editor to see if DC had found another artist to replace Cynthia.

The fact that they decided to not advertise it as a Wonder Woman crossover also made me angry. The reason I agreed to do the project was because I felt that they were supporting me since they really liked what I did with Wonder Woman. It became more obvious that Wonder Woman is a character that DC cares very little about; what they cared about was that *I* was doing Wonder Woman. It's kind of flattering but it also says that the person is more important than the work and I've never liked that attitude.

PAT: *I understand that Wonder Woman may be worth a lot more to DC on the level of licensing than as a published character, although I also understand that their agreement with the Marston estate is that they have to keep publishing it or else they don't have rights to the character.*

GEORGE: That I've not heard and I'm not privy to that information.

PAT: *That came from a reliable source.*

GEORGE: If that's true, it explains why DC's still doing it. I appreciated the compliment about the good work I was doing with Wonder Woman but I had hoped that they would have had a little more faith in the character. Particularly on the fiftieth anniversary. This is, after all, the longest-running female character

a Wonder Woman crossover made me angry."

in comics, almost non-stop!

I had proposed other things that they could have done for her anniversary. I was really pushing these projects — for example, the anniversary poster, which I drew. They were supposed to be doing a WONDER WOMAN trade paperback. WONDER WOMAN: YEAR ONE, which reprints the first eight issues of my WONDER WOMAN, is nice but I don't consider it an anniversary book — because there's nothing from the fifty years, just from my version. When I first heard about it, they were planning to print it with regular comic paper like they did DEATH IN THE FAMILY and I said, "For a fiftieth anniversary, *this* is what you're going to give us?"

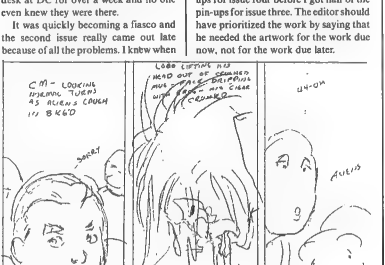
Now that they're not advertising WAR OF THE GODS as a WONDER WOMAN book they don't have anything to advertise. If I were drawing it, they would have advertised it as such, because then they would have figured that the **Perez** name would override any negative feedback that would follow a WONDER WOMAN anniversary since DC's faith in Wonder Woman is pretty much nil; other characters that didn't sell well were promoted because it was prestigious.

I was feeling a bit angry because it was like I was the only person fighting for Wonder Woman. Then I lost my editor due to an act of God and of husband because she went into labor **Karen Berger** went on maternity leave and so we ended up with an editor who, try as he might, is still a novice who doesn't have the push that Karen has in the company.

Everything was starting to fall apart and at this point I was incredibly depressed.

I was trying to contact the editor for a week without any luck, and I wasn't the only one; the new artist had been trying to get through, and he couldn't contact the editor, either. DC had this new answering machine — unfortunately, the new answering machine doesn't tell you if the person is in or not, it just takes the message. I had a good number of pages of artwork turned in and they sat on a desk at DC for over a week and no one even knew they were there.

It was quickly becoming a fiasco and the second issue really came out late because of all the problems. I knew when I had finished scripting the last page of issue two that the book was late but I didn't understand why it was so late. I was doing the scripting after the inking had already been done. And when it came out they let a lot of mistakes get through, even after I proofread and pointed out the mistakes. And unfortunately the new artist suffered from the WAR curse, too. We were getting artwork from him for the pin-ups in random order; we finished all of the pin-ups for issue four before I got half of the pin-ups for issue three. The editor should have prioritized the work by saying that he needed the artwork for the work due now, not for the work due later.


CM- LOOKING INSANE, TIRED AS HELL'S COUCH IN BACK'D
SORRY
LOOK CLOTHES HAD HEAD OUT OF SCRUNCHED MUSCLES DEFINED WITH CLEAR CRUNCH
CRUNCH
AUGH
AUGH

"I finally was so angry that I had to ask Karen Berger to

please send me a check, and I just hung up the phone."

I later heard that there was never any newsstand distribution for WAR OF THE GODS #1. Diamond Distributors asked me if there would be a newsstand edition of #1. I knew that physically there would be no difference but — as far as I know — no newsstand has carried WAR OF THE GODS. Automatically, WAR OF THE GODS #1 sales have been cut down because all of a sudden it has no newsstand distribution. Anyone reading comics that has no access to a comics shop would have the crossovers with no availability of the main story!

I must say that there were some people who were put on the spot in working on this project! **Keith Giffen** really came through, considering he had no knowledge of WAR OF THE GODS until I called him. **John Ostrander** was a real prince to work with, as was **Marv Wolfman.** Marv literally had to stop mid-stride with what he was doing to fit my storyline in. He actually regretted that he couldn't have done more with the Titans.

Getting back to the ARMAGEDDON 2001 series, I sent DC an angry letter because that series represented promises made to me that had been broken. It was very hard for me to justify working at my best when everyone was changing the rules along the way.

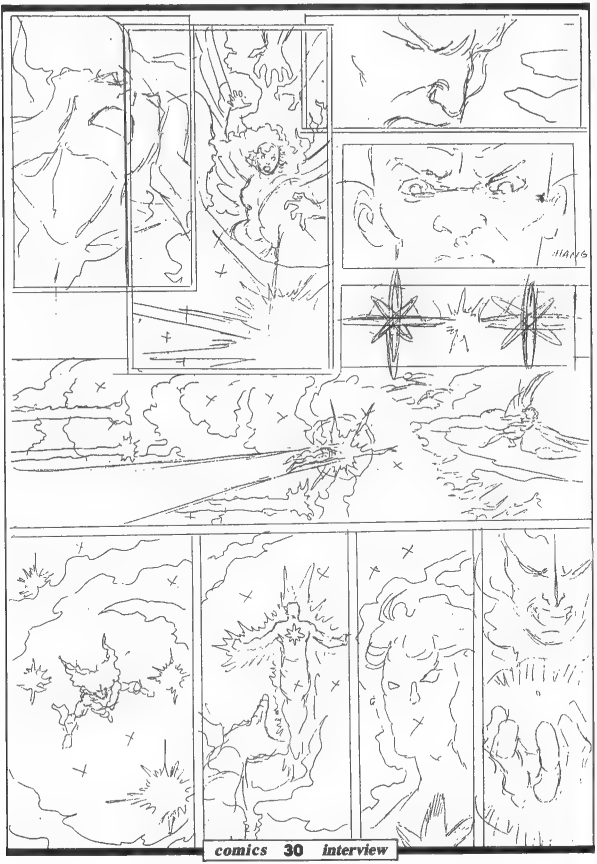
The last straw was in the case of WONDER WOMAN when I have Steve Trevor and Etta Candy getting married in the last issue. I had it in the synopsis months ago, the plot was handed in, I finally scripted it, off it went, and then I receive a phone call saying that **Bill Loebs** is now the writer and that he was going to be doing the wedding. This was something that I was setting up and I was the one who wanted to handle it. It could even have been a misunderstanding between Bill and me — maybe he assumed that I was just getting them engaged and he was taking care of the wedding — but the fact was that the entire issue went through all of the final steps, the wedding was there, it was drawn. Now they wanted it redrawn and I just refused to rewrite it.

I finally was so angry that I had to ask **Karen Berger** to please send me a check, which they had already delayed by two weeks, and I just hung up the phone.

I have not spoken to anyone at DC Comics since then.

Right now I'm working for Marvel and other people. I once compared Marvel and DC, when Marvel was going through the controversial **Jim Shooter** stage, to one being a tank and the other a

"To me, DC has become a cab where you don't know



the driver is asleep at the wheel — until it's too late."

cab. Marvel was the tank at the time. When I faced up to it I realized that this was a dangerous machine coming at me and I have to get out of the way.

To me, DC has now become a cab where you don't know that the driver is asleep at the wheel. You think it's benign and you have nothing to worry about —until it's too late. If the problems were just with WAR OF THE GODS I could say definitely it's just me. But other people tell me I'm not the only kid on the block in that situation at DC.

PAT: *At this point, all I've seen is issues #1 and #2 of WAR OF THE GODS. It appears that Wonder Woman is dead. Is that how you leave the book? Is Wonder Woman dead?*

GEORGE: She's on the cover of issue #4 — so that should give an indication that she will be back. Basically, there is a lot to squeeze into the storyline, because I had a full *year's* worth of plots that I had to squeeze into four issues. I didn't want Bill to be handling a lot of loose plot threads. I wanted to finish what I had started. When Bill comes in he can use or not use the characters and little bits and pieces that I left. I didn't want it to be like he had to take the book in any one direction.

PAT: *The Wonder Woman that revives is still the same character, right? It's still Princess Diana?*

GEORGE: There is an appearance in THE DEMON that explains all that — and explains Diana's coming back.

PAT: *With all of the above out of the way, the book being finished, and you being paid for it, I have to ask you about the entire concept. Do you think that the concept of doing company-wide multi-issue crossovers is more trouble than it's worth — not just on your part, but for the industry as a whole?*

GEORGE: I think that when a company is trying very hard to develop a sense that every book has its own integrity, well, let's put it this way — when you have to stop a book to fit a commercial product in, regardless to how good or bad it fits, I think conceptually it's a bad idea. Unless, of course, the crossover has a real purpose.

Before WAR OF THE GODS I didn't want to be involved in a crossover ever again. In fact, because of INVASION, I said that if they wanted Wonder Woman involved in the next crossover, they could find someone else to draw those issues. Which was ironic since I ended up doing WAR OF THE GODS.

Crossovers themselves, I feel, are terrible for creativity. It requires so many compromises that shouldn't have to exist. A series like ARMAGEDDON 2001 is ideal because you can do it and not have to disturb another book's continuity. Crossovers are more trouble than they're worth, especially now, since creators have a much stronger say in their creations at both companies. Still, the company can just say, "Do it, or else." It certainly happened with INFINITY GAUNTLET and it happened with WAR OF THE GODS because I pushed a hell of a lot of it.

PAT: *Do you think that if the company*

YOU KILLED 'EM!
NOT ME.
JUPITER.
I DID IT
SON OF VULCAN
SON OF VULCAN
I'M PISSED
CLOSE ON TUNIC

CAPTAIN MARVEL! STOP! THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WILL BE DESTROYED BY THIS MADNESS!
IT'S NO USE. THAT YOUTHFUL SPARK THAT SO CHARACTERIZED HIM IS GONE FROM HIS EYES. HE IS BEWITCHED.
HIS POWER AND SPEED IS INCREDIBLE. I CAN'T JUST STAY ON THE DEFENSIVE. THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE.
THOUGH MY HEART SHRIEKS AT THE THOUGHT, I MUST FIGHT BACK...
...EVEN IF IT BE TO THE DEATH!
BY THE HEAVENS... THAT RED GLADIATOR... WHY CAN I NOT ESCAPE THE FEELING...
"...THAT, I KNOW! AHA...?"
AS THE GREEK LORD OF THE THUNDERBOLT AWAITS THE TWO CHARGE HEADLONG...
ONLY TO--
IT WAS NOT MY DOING THAT WAS NOT MY BOLT!
NO!!
YOU DESTROYED THEM!! DAMN YOU, JUPITER! WHY--
NO, LORD JUPITER... IT WAS MINE!
SURELY YOU DIDN'T THINK I COULD BE GOTTEN RID OF THAT EASILY.
I COULDN'T ALLOW YOU TO USE THAT BOY AS MY BOLT MERELY TORE A HOLE IN OLYMPUS' WALL--
--SO THAT I COULD THRUST BOTH HIM AND THE AMAZON AWAY FROM YOUR INFLUENCE
AS FOR ME--
AND THUS THE UNIVERSE IS SAVED AGAIN--
DAGGERS OF WAR PLUNGING DEEP INTO HER HEART--

"CRISIS was done to change continuity, SECRET

WARS to promote toys. W.O.T.G. was a class-A mess!"

feels a need for this type of major event that it should be done using a lot of the company's characters but in a single story and not crossovers into the regular books?

GEORGE: In an idealistic world that's the best way to go. The thing is that DC as a company, as an editorial department, were not responsible for ARMAGEDDON 2001 and WAR OF THE GODS, just as Marvel's editorial staff can't be solely responsible for INFINITY GAUNTLET and all of the other crossovers.

The company that *owns* the respective company sees that these things are profitable so instead of doing one that's good they end up flooding the market with them.

In the case of Marvel, they survive it, usually, because they have the greatest share of the market. I think DC is kind of cutting its own throat by putting out too much. In my opinion, in the case of DC, if they do it once, people feel that they're producing a special project. When they do it more than once — like they did with ARMAGEDDON 2001 and WAR — people say that they're either trying to be like Marvel or they're trying to rip us off. I don't think DC has the market share to do these types of things without hurting themselves in the process. I think ARMAGEDDON 2001 did bite into WAR OF THE GODS' sales — because there's just so many dollars that are going to go there. DC is not strong enough to say that they're going to take a bite out of Marvel's sales. Instead, they're going to take a bite out of themselves.

Crossovers are just one class-A pain in the ass. I've been on both sides, from the book that had its continuity interrupted, to the book that was responsible for it, and you end up having more arguments than any other type of book. Despite the fact that I was paid a lot of money to do it, in addition to my regular royalties and page rate, I still don't think it's worth anybody's time. And I hope that the sales prompt the company to drop the idea. It isn't that good a marketing tool — at least at DC. Even Marvel is shying away from more crossovers. Marvel used crossovers on INFINITY GAUNTLET only on books that needed to cross over — say, SILVER SURFER — and on books that needed to boost sales. I think the day of the SECRET WARS/CRISIS crossovers are gone unless they find a legitimate reason for doing the crossover.

My legitimate reason for doing the WAR OF THE GODS crossover, in my heart, was Wonder Woman's fiftieth anniversary. With that gone, WAR OF THE GODS had no reason to exist. It could have been done like ARMAGEDDON 2001.

CRISIS was done to change the continuity. SECRET WARS was to promote a line of toys; WAR OF THE GODS was just one class-A mess!

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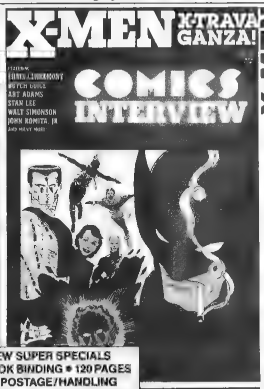

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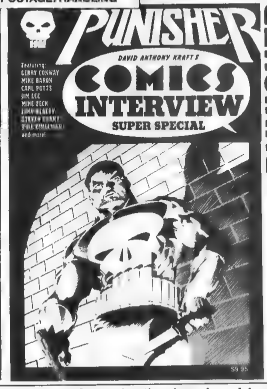

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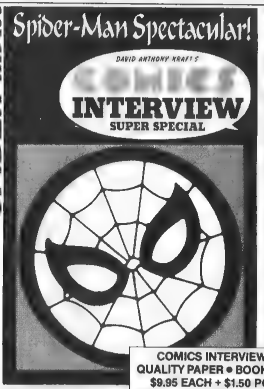

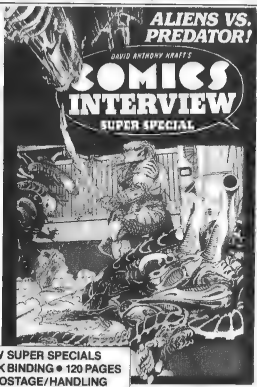

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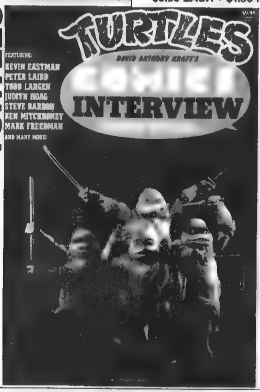

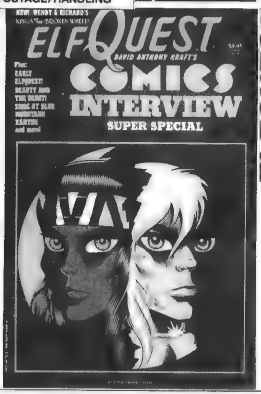

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"I was into TRANSFORMERS and G.I. JOE and the

Jason Parizanski was introduced to me, due to his youth, as "the future of comics fandom." I find that phrase both amusing and curious, however accurate it may be, since I can recall a time when the bulk of comics fandom consisted of people in Jason's age group. In fact, I am certain that young teens still represent a sizable portion of the "now" of comics fandom. Be that as it may, I also found myself interested in what Jason might have to say about those who, to coin a phrase, represent the past of comics fandom . . .

DARREL L. BOATZ: *When did you first start reading comic books?*

JASON PARIZANSKI: I first started when I was *much* younger. I was into TRANSFORMERS and G.I JOE and the like, and I saw a commercial on the TV for the TRANSFORMERS comic book, so I got that. The first *official* comic book I ever got, I guess, was TRANSFORMERS #2.

DARREL: *So, you started with what was on television, the cartoons that were being used as comic books as well. Were you into the toys and other things that they were marketing?*

JASON: That was the main thing I liked.

DARREL: *And from there you discovered more about the world of comic books.*

JASON: Yes. The first superhero comic I ever got was a New Universe comic, PSI-FORCE #1.

DARREL: *What was your first impression of superheroes?*

JASON: Actually, I didn't like it too much

DARREL: *Why not?*

JASON: It was kind of weird. As I read it *now* I kind of like it, but . . . before I even got *involved* with comic books, I liked SPIDER-MAN on TV — believe it or not I had a pair of Spider-Man pajamas. I liked SUPERMAN, of course.

DARREL: *From the movies?*

JASON: I don't know what from, just about every kid around likes SUPERMAN.

DARREL: *Okay. But you didn't care for PSI-FORCE at first, but you still kept reading comic books.*

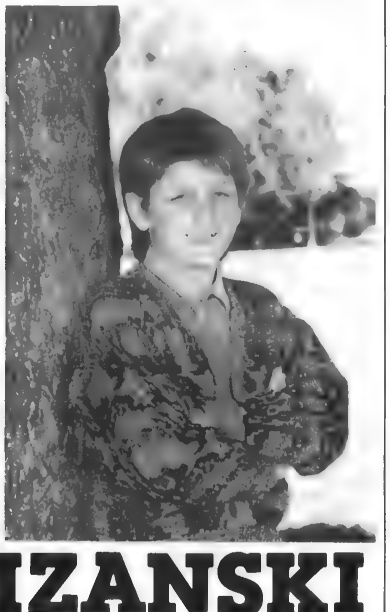
JASON: Yeah, I went to SPIDER-MAN from there.

DARREL: *One of the things I want to get into here, you've kind of grown up with comic shops as a given — you know, you can find just about anywhere nowadays. A lot of people reading this probably grew up buying comics wherever they could find them, so it's like a different perspective type of thing here. You're growing up with a different reality, do you understand what I'm getting at?*

JASON: Was there a question? *(Laughter.)* I understand, I get what you're talking about — you want to know what I think of all the old farts of fandom. *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *Right, right. Well, that too. What is your impression of how comics operate, and how fandom works?*

JASON: In that respect I guess I'm a bit more advanced than most kids who just read comic books because I've been exposed to CAPA-alpha and the MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY, and all that stuff has really improved my knowledge. I understand that comic books before were pretty much of a kids thing, like in the Golden Age, then **Fredric**



JASON PARIZANSKI

Lobo, Superman, Batman and Robin ® 1991 DC Comics, Inc. / Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck ® 1991 Warner Bros. / The Sprint ® 1991 Will Eisner / The Hulk and Spider-Man ® 1991 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.

first comic I got, I guess, was TRANSFORMERS #2."

Wertham got down on comics in the EC Age and that's where the Comics Code came from. Nowadays, I think, it's like pretty much anything can go out in a comic book.

DARREL: *How did you get involved with CAPA-alpha and MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY?*

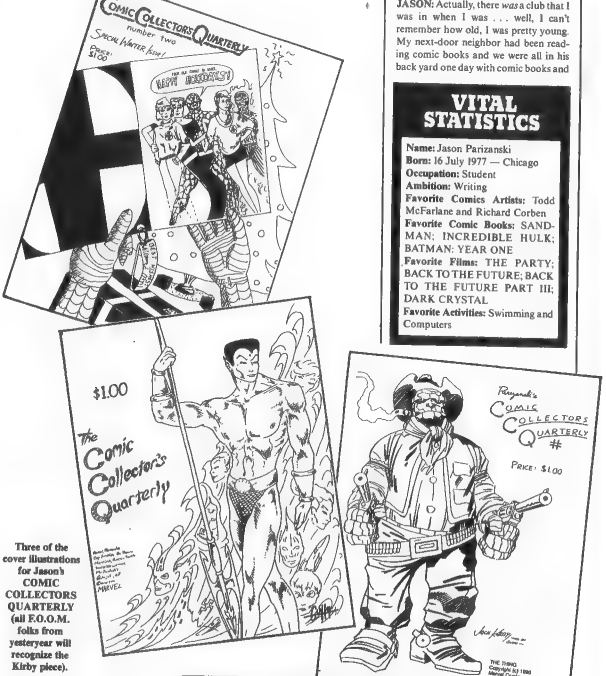
JASON: Oh, well actually I got involved with MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY first. **Robert Hough** had written a letter to AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #308 and in the last sentence he plugged MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY. So . . . actually, a year later I kind of remembered that I had seen that, so I wrote to him and he sent me a free copy of MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY #10. And they had plugged CAPA-alpha many many times in there, so I wrote **Joel Thingvall** and he signed me up on the waitlist. And from there I've gone on to a whole *bunch* of fanzines and clubs. I'm even doing my own; it can go out to anybody who wants it in the mail.

DARREL: *That's one thing, a lot of us were in fan clubs, kind of fan clubs, when we were kids, but it was usually like the neighborhood kids all getting together.*

JASON: Actually, there *was* a club that I was in when I was . . . well, I can't remember how old, I was pretty young. My next-door neighbor had been reading comic books and we were all in his back yard one day with comic books and

VITAL STATISTICS

Name: Jason Parizanski
Born: 16 July 1977 — Chicago
Occupation: Student
Ambition: Writing
Favorite Comics Artists: Todd McFarlane and Richard Corben
Favorite Comic Books: SANDMAN; INCREDIBLE HULK; BATMAN: YEAR ONE
Favorite Films: THE PARTY; BACK TO THE FUTURE; BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III; DARK CRYSTAL
Favorite Activities: Swimming and Computers



Three of the cover illustrations for Jason's COMIC COLLECTORS QUARTERLY (all F.O.O.M. folks from yesteryear will recognize the Kirby piece).

"I think they should utilize their Epic line more. I think

we decided to start a comic-book club, and we called ourselves the Comic Book Club. We only had one meeting. *(Laughter.)* Then we forgot about it.

DARREL: *But you're still friends, right?*

JASON: Yeah, of course.

DARREL: *Where do you get your comics?*

JASON: Five-Star Entertainment.

DARREL: *Do they have any kind of subscription service or anything?*

JASON: Well, there's this magazine-type thing called ADVANCE COMICS and I'm a good customer so he gives it to me for free, and you can fill out a form three months in advance for all the comic books you want. I fill that out and then he gets them all for me. Some of the things are resolicited so he can't get them then.

DARREL: *What seems to be very interesting to you right now?*

JASON: I'm kind of getting into the DC *grittier* type things, like I'm really enjoying SANDMAN a lot. And I like SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN; that's really *weird* but it's great. **Peter Milligan** is a great writer. And one of my other favorite titles right now is ANIMAL MAN. I was kind of unhappy that **Grant Morrison** left the title, but **Peter Milligan** is doing a great job.

DARREL: *What did you think of the last few issues Grant Morrison wrote?*

JASON: I thought they were masterpieces, especially issue #26. But the thing about the monkey with the typewriter, it was all so weird but it seemed normal. *(Laughter.)* All in a day's work. **Grant Morrison** is one of my favorite writers.

DARREL: *What is it about his writing that makes him one of your favorite writers?*

JASON: Well, sometimes it can scare me and sometimes it can . . . it makes me *think*. ARKHAM ASYLUM, I had to read that three times before I understood it.

DARREL: *One concern some people have is what effect comic books might have on the people who read them; have you been following any of this in COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE or THE COMICS JOURNAL or anything?*

JASON: Well, I get COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE but I don't get much of a chance to read it, but I know something about it.

DARREL: *Do you have any thoughts from your own personal experiences about what effects comics might be having?*

JASON: Well, none for me. I read them and —

DARREL: *Well, you just said they make you think.*

JASON: I think that they *have* increased my vocabulary, and *definitely* my knowledge. The DC titles are the ones that *really* challenge me. I like Marvel a lot, but DC is better at making me think.

DARREL: *What would you like to see Marvel do different?*

JASON: Well, I think that they should utilize their Epic line more. They have a whole branch, I guess you could say, that they could do *anything* with, and they're not really *using* it. I think that PUNISHER could be a good series in the Epic line.

DARREL: *Take it out of the Marvel Universe, just have it as its own thing?*

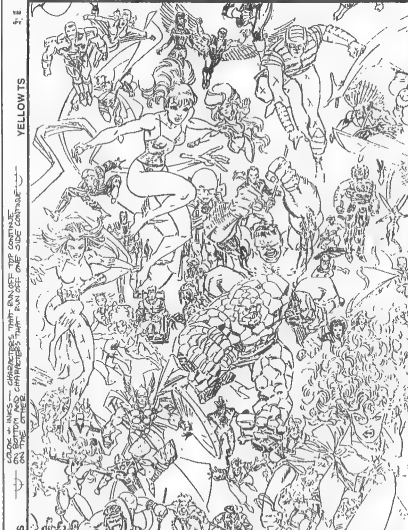
JASON: No, *both*. What they have as Epic doesn't have to have anything to do with the regular.

DARREL: *That's an interesting idea. Let's try this, say you were told the perfect comic book was going to be coming out, what would you want that comic book to be?*

JASON: I don't quite understand.

DARREL: *What would be your idea of the perfect comic?*

You've seen the cover (MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #50) and the poster.



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that PUNISHER could be a good series in the Epic line."

JASON: That's a hard one. I think a *good* comic book would be — I can't really say what a *perfect* comic book would be — one that had a good writer and a good artist utilizing a character with interesting powers, different from the mainstream.

DARREL: *What would you want them to do stories about?*

JASON: Well, it would be a superhero comic book and I would like . . . geez, that's hard.

DARREL: *We can come back to it if you want.*

JASON: Okay.

DARREL: *You said INCREDIBLE HULK was one of your favorites. What is it you like about INCREDIBLE HULK.*

JASON: Well, I like the conflict between Green Hulk, Grey Hulk and Banner.

DARREL: *I really haven't been following it lately so maybe you'd better tell me about what that conflict is.*

JASON: Basically, the Grey Hulk usually does the basic comic-book stuff, and there's usually a few Banner and Betty scenes, Grey Hulk and Betty scenes, and then a few dialogues inside the mind of Banner. The Grey Hulk really resents the Green Hulk and doesn't like being compared to him Banner still doesn't like being the beast, you know — they don't really go with that anymore, but he still doesn't like *being* the beast. And the Green Hulk is stupid and he doesn't really do anything except for "Hulk smash!" The Grey Hulk comes out at night, Banner is during the day, and when he gets really really enraged he becomes the Green Hulk. The Green Hulk hasn't come out that much, it's mainly been the Green Hulk and the Grey Hulk having psychological wars.

DARREL: *Okay, so it's more inside the Grey Hulk's head.*

JASON: Banner too, on the side, because he knows that he's going to have to fight with the winner.

DARREL: *I may have to check this out. You also read SANDMAN. I suppose DOLL'S HOUSE has been talked to death, but what were your impressions of that story?*

JASON: Well, issue #10, the first episode of DOLL'S HOUSE, was my first issue. If you want to know the truth of why I picked it up, it was because of the cover. It was just so weird that I had to buy it. And it was pretty interesting. It was *weird* — haven't seen any issue that hasn't been weird. I think my favorite issue of the DOLL'S HOUSE story was #13 where the Sandman, Morpheus, they showed his 600-year relationship with the man who refuses to die, with guest appearances by **William Shakespeare.** It was really interesting.

DARREL: *Let's get back to the question of what kind of stories you might want to see in the "perfect" comic book, and I'll try to approach this a different way. What would you like to see the* focus *of the series be? Would you like to see a conflict like with the Grey Hulk and the Green Hulk and Dr. Banner, or some kind of strange thing like they did in DOLL'S HOUSE — what would you like to see be the center of the series?*

JASON: Well, basically it would be kind of a generic comic book, kind of done as a fun comic book with generic stories, you know.

DARREL: *A fun book?*

JASON: Yeah. Not humorous, I mean played like a typical Golden Age SUPERMAN. It wouldn't be one of my *serious* comic books that I read, but it would be a real fun thing. A generic typical superhero.

DARREL: *I think that answers the question. I want to explore your in-*

Now here's the original pencils by Erik Larsen — Spidey artist extraordinaire.

"I'm a fan. Anybody could be a comic-book fan."

volvement in fandom a little bit. How would you define yourself, as a fan, as a collector, some other way?

JASON: Well, a fan.

DARREL: *And what does that mean to you?*

JASON: Being part of . . . well, fandom is all of comic-book fans. I'm a fan, *anybody* can be a comic-book fan.

DARREL: *You don't have to be active in fandom to be a fan.*

JASON: Right, but I am really active in fandom. I found out about *most* of the great books that I'm reading now *through* fandom, and I've made *lots* of friends. I don't think I would be reading comic books now if it weren't for fandom.

DARREL: *Why not?*

JASON: It kept my interest sparked.

DARREL: *Do you think if you couldn't be active in fandom you would lose interest in comics?*

JASON: Well, basically, if I couldn't be active in fandom I probably couldn't be active in comic books; it would be for some reason like my mom outlawed them . . . . I don't understand, why *couldn't* I be active in fandom?

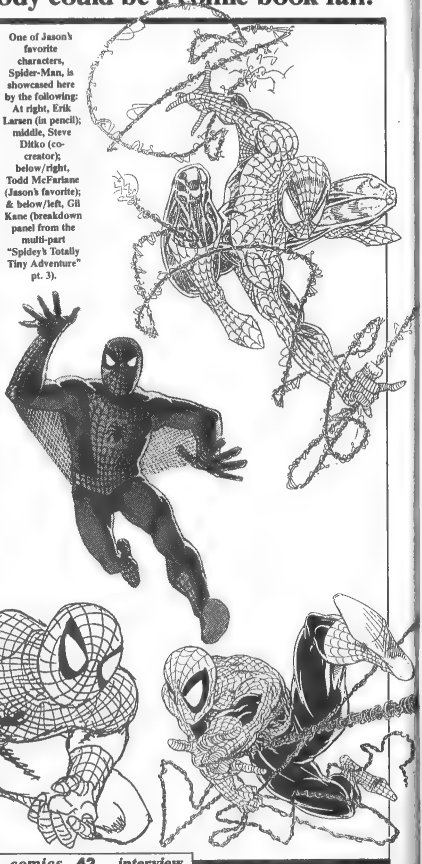
DARREL: *Okay, let's say if you* hadn't *discovered the MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY or CAPA-alpha or any of this other stuff, would you still be reading comics or not?*

JASON: That's basically a "what if?" question.

DARREL: *Let's put it this way: Would the comic books that are out there keep you interested enough in comic books by themselves that you would still be reading them?*

JASON: Well . . . I don't think so. It depends. Basically, nobody at my school reads comic books. There's a couple of

One of Jason's favorite characters, Spider-Man, is showcased here by the following: At right, Erik Larsen (in pencil); middle, Steve Ditko (co-creator); below/right, Todd McFarlane (Jason's favorite); & below/left, Gil Kane (breakdown panel from the multi-part "Spidey's Totally Tiny Adventure" pt. 3).



"The COMIC COLLECTOR is for fans and by fans."

Pencil panel from the ROBIN limited series, another of J.P.'s fave characters.

people who, you know, read them on the bus, but that's about it. That would have been one of the reasons I stopped reading comics, because nobody else was.

DARREL: *A peer pressure thing.*

JASON: Not peer pressure, just . . . . If I wasn't involved in fandom I wouldn't know about the people that read comic books.

DARREL: *You feel like maybe it's something you wouldn't do if you didn't know other people who were doing it.*

JASON: Right, actively.

DARREL: *So, let's get into MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY and CAPA-alpha, which are apas. What is an apa?*

JASON: An apa is, basically, a group of fans who on a monthly or bimonthly or quarterly basis put out a collective publication. There's something called minimum activity, like for CAPA-alpha minimum activity is four pages every three months, and if you fail to meet it you're dropped from membership. CAPA-alpha is, in my opinion, the *best* apa around. It's had over 600 members according to what **Martin Haas** put out, basically a membership list from CAPA-alpha #1 through #300.

DARREL: *And there's a lot of people on the list like Don and Maggie Thompson from CBG, but these people aren't in CAPA-alpha right now, they were in it before.*

JASON: **Mark Verheiden** is in it right now. MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY started out as a fanzine by **Robert Hough,** he was the only contributor, and he advertised in a couple of Marvel comic books. It progressed from there. When **Robert Hough** burnt out **Charles Novinskie** took over and turned it into an apa.

DARREL: *So, previously people would send things to Robert Hough to be included in the newsletter which he published?*

JASON: Yeah, you sent in a contribution and Robert took everything, decided what would go in.

DARREL: *The difference in an apa is the guy in charge doesn't act as an editor or publisher, so everything sent in goes in.*

JASON: Right.

DARREL: *Has it gotten better?*

JASON: Definitely. The first issue was one page, #30 was 100 pages. Of course, in an apa it's not limited to how much one person can afford to publish because everybody publishes their *own* contributions, has enough copies made so one can go in every copy. And it doesn't matter if you send in a two-page zine or a 20-page zine, as long as you can afford it. The minimum activity for MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY is ten pages every two months. Apas *can* be expensive, but they're a lot of fun.

DARREL: *And how many copies of your zine would you have to make?*

JASON: For CAPA-alpha it's 50, for MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY it's 35, but you can print as many as you like above that for your own use. CAPA-alpha has a 40-member limit and MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY has a 30-member limit, so if the membership is full the people who sign up go on the waitlist. **Jim Sulicrup** is a great guy; he has advertised MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY in MARVEL AGE, and we sent a free copy of each mailing to Marvel. But if we get five on the waitlist we'll stop doing that. *(Laughter.)* One of the things I wanted to do was plug my fanzine, maybe get the name of my fanzine and have my address somewhere.

DARREL: *Okay. What's the name of your fanzine?*

JASON: THE COMIC COLLECTOR MONTHLY, 6670 N. Octavia, Chicago, IL 60631. It's a fanzine *for* the fans and *by* the fans. It's a newsletter, you can contribute reviews of comic books, you can have conversations with other members, news bits. There's going to be a question and answer column, all sorts of great stuff. Art contests, writing contests.

DARREL: *Big plans.*

JASON: Yeah.

DARREL: *How did you get the idea to start this?*

JASON: Basically, everybody who was in the MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY has broken off into their little branches of fanzines, and I'm in quite a few. I was offered a position with HIGH ADVENTURE COMICS JOURNAL. I'm the editor of THE COMIC CONNECTION, my favorite one. It's put out by

"When I was younger, I only knew kids that read comics.

one of my good friends and if you want to join that you can just write me and ask. There's quite a few, COMICAL MONTHLY, PERIPHERAL VISION, which is mostly computers and video games; 'NUFF SAID NEWS; COMIC NEWS MONTHLY, I was asked to be the assistant editor of that but I guess I waited too long. My fanzine comes out quarterly because I need time for school.

DARREL: *Well, what inspired you to start your own quarterly COMICS COLLECTOR MONTHLY at such a young age?*

JASON: I started it in the seventh grade; people sent me contributions. I think it's a great idea, for *me* I mean. I don't know if this is really going to get off the ground because the print on it really isn't so great, my word processor and my printer don't really do nice-looking things. I've experimented with spacing and bold-facing to make it look better, that kind of thing.

DARREL: *Well . . . I'm trying to think, there was something I meant to talk to you about —*

JASON: My views on the old farts of fandom? *(Laughter.)*

DARREL: *Right, right. A lot of people reading this have been reading comics since before you were born.*

JASON: Many many years.

DARREL: *And you are in contact with a lot of them through your various activities. So, what do you think of all these old guys still reading comic books?*

JASON: Basically, CAPA-alpha is almost 100% old farts. *(Laughter.)* I'm the youngest member, and there's someone who's five years older than me, and everybody else is an old fart. *(Laughter.)* I think it's great that they're there, you know, showing people that comic books aren't just for kids. I used to think that only kids read comics. When I was younger I only knew kids that read them, and occasionally my dad would look through one. Now my dad reads them a lot more. He likes PUNISHER.

DARREL: *With all your activity, does your family encourage you or help you out with any of this stuff?*

JASON: My dad — my mom and dad are divorced — my dad buys comic books for me, and my mom will get one here and there. I don't think my mom likes them too much.

DARREL: *Well, my mom was the same way. Getting back to old farts —*

JASON: I think that the old farts, from what I've seen of the old farts in CAPA-alpha, a whole lot of them are nice. I have to say it, they're all nice. *(Laughter.)* It's great. You go to a comic-book convention and a *lot* of people you'll see there

Now, my dad reads them a lot more. He likes Punisher."

Left & right: Richard Corben is high on Jason's like list — story by Robert Barrett.

are old farts.

DARREL: *Some people are worried that there aren't enough kids that show up at conventions anymore, it's kind of funny you see all the old farts there and think it's great.* (Laughter.) *Do you get a lot out of reading stuff from them about, you know, the good old days?*

JASON: Well, I basically skim-read all of the zines I get except for **Tom McGeehan's**. He talks a lot about the old days of CAPA-alpha and I like that a lot, like about old CAPA-alpha policies and all that, and what it was like under **Jerry Bailes. Tom McGeehan** is *the* member, he was there at the beginning, a full member on the roster from issue #1. I like **Richard Pryor's** stuff a lot, like in HEROES ILLUSTRATED it showed all the stuff he was doing and all the stuff that was being talked about in the '60s, with comic books; I thought that was cool. I like that. I liked **Joel Thingvall** talking in MARVEL ZOMBIE SOCIETY about his early involvement with Marvel, working for FOOM. I liked reading about that. I like when people talk about their first comics, how they first got involved with comics. And when my dad talks to me it's interesting, like he used to read comic books a lot. All the kids used to go over to one house, everybody would bring comics, and they would trade comics and stuff; you would save the *good* ones but you would basically trade most of them, that sounds pretty interesting.

DARREL: *Yeah, I wonder when people stopped doing that.*

JASON: I don't know, maybe when they realized the comic books were going up in price.

DARREL: *Yeah.*

JASON: Nowadays it's, like, total stupidity. *(Laughter.)* I mean it's crazy, and I'm involved in the craziness. Just a second, okay.

DARREL: *Sure.*

(A minute later . . .)

JASON: My mom says we've got a few more minutes. What was I talking about?

DARREL: *The craziness.*

JASON: It's pure lunacy. SPIDER-MAN #1, the bagged issue, went up in price in less than a week. In at least one place it sold for $90.00. I guess I kind of contributed to that because I bought eight copies of the first issue; I don't really believe in that, but I think it's a pretty good investment.

DARREL: *Why?*

JASON: Well, I don't think it will go up soon because there's no demand — mean not the bagged editions but the regular. It's already started to go up in price but I think it'll go down gradually and then

THE SIMPSONS is Jason's favorite television program. Here are 27 creations from the show. One is a superhero.

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Not much in comics lasts ten years. Publishers come and go, favorite titles get cancelled and cover prices increase regularly. It seems that very few things in comics have any real staying power.

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"I didn't get SUPERMAN because I don't like it."

Here & below (clockwise): Superman, The Hulk, Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, Bob Kane's Batman, and Will Eisner's The Spirit. All these are among the things Jason most respects — except Superman, one of his least-liked characters.

rise slowly for ten or fifteen years. And then it will start to go up when the *next* generation of comic-book fans comes around wanting SPIDER-MAN #1. I don't know, it'll *probably* last.

DARREL: *Well, what did you think of the comic itself?*

JASON: Well . . . I got one copy first and then I found out about how everything was going up, basically what happened with DEATH IN THE FAMILY, so I got more. I read it pretty fast. I timed it, reading the first two issues, it took me eleven minutes, and that's *sad*. Usually a good comic book can take me half an hour. In #1 the artwork . . . well, a lot of old farts don't like it, I don't know about you —

DARREL: *I think Todd's a pretty good artist.*

JASON: Well, the art was great but it wasn't as good as on INFINITY, INC. and it wasn't as good as on AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. But it was pretty good. He . . . for just first starting, it's the first time he's written and drawn, it was pretty good. It was interesting. The text page was pretty good, he was honest. He is a good storyteller.

DARREL: *Yeah. My understanding was that this didn't have to fit in with the Marvel continuity so —*

JASON: Yeah, I read that somewhere too, they're just going to kind of let him have his own space.

DARREL: *So, you thought it was a shame you could read the first two issues in just eleven minutes.*

JASON: Yeah.

DARREL: *You want more out of a comic than just a bunch of pictures.*

JASON: Yeah

DARREL: *What is it that you look for in comics?*

JASON: I don't *look* for anything, it's like I'll read them and if I like them I'll get them again. Lately I've been cutting down a lot because it's gotten pretty expensive on my dad. You know, he doesn't say anything about that, but I can tell and so I've cut down on a whole bunch of ones that I *liked*. I had to drop JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE, ALPHA FLIGHT — I'm not sure why I dropped ALPHA FLIGHT but I did — I dropped a whole bunch.

DARREL: *But you don't look for anything per se, just the ones that really do it for you.*

JASON: Yeah. and if somebody recommends something I'll pick it up, that's how I got most of my DC comics. At first I only read Marvels, but then I got BATMAN, then Batman guest-starred in SUPERMAN — but I didn't get SUPERMAN because I don't *like* it. *(Laughter.)* Basically, if somebody recommends it to me I'll buy it. If I see some interesting characters, a great writer, a great artist, I'll pick it up. A good-looking cover, you know — I basically window shop.

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

CAREER OF EVIL

Dear David,

This is a bit late, but . . . I picked up COMICS INTERVIEW #97 for the **Dave Stevens** interview. Nice job! A number of magazines have done features on THE ROCKETEER (PREVUE, CINEFANTASTIQUE, etc.) and thankfully each has gone at it in a different way, with you concentrating on the creator more than the others. I've been following this thing since STARSLAYER and PACIFIC PRESENTS and am *still* waiting for the third episode of the second story to come out (the one, ironically, that introduced "Lothar" — who's miraculously already appeared in the movie — as well as The Shadow, who probably won't be). The film itself (I *hope* you've seen it by now!) strikes me as the best thing Disney Studios may have done in my lifetime — perhaps since 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA (certainly, at least since SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES!). How *wonderful* for someone to bring a comic-book character so *accurately* to life, both in the visual designs and the whole character of everything and everyone involved. I read someone wanted an altered helmet to show expression — *how typical!* I'm glad the original helmet won out (even if the rocket-pack was altered) in the same way THE FLASH on TV has a costume only very *slightly* changed from the comics (and in fact the comic has changed now to match the TV version! I wish they'd do that in the BATMAN comics . . .).

Now this is crazy — the first issue I pick up in a long while, and once again you're interviewing **Gene Colan!!** Wow! I think Gene really needs better inkers than Marvel has been throwing his way recently. I really *hate* to see all that talent looking so bad in the printed state, just as **Jack Kirby**'s later art suffered (until **Greg Theakston** started inking him). Looking at page 50 I can't understand what went through the editor's mind — Gene's cover strikes me as *far* better than **Ernie Colon's.** I recall when that issue came out — Gene's covers were usually of the highest quality — especially when he did NIGHT FORCE for DC. Wish they'd bring *that* back! But even more, I'd love to see Gene re-team with **Don McGregor** and do another DETECTIVES INC.! (You know, thinking *way* back, it amazes me just *how much* I enjoyed Gene's work when inked by such seemingly unsuitable people for him as **Joe Sinnott, Wally Wood** and **Jack Abel.** But then, I always thought **Sinnott** did the best inks for **Kirby** as well — and just recently I finally got to see **Wood** inking **Kirby** as well. WOW!)

I thought I'd mention that I finally bought a CD player, and decided to get a copy of **Blue Oyster Cult's** CAREER OF EVIL: THE METAL YEARS. Even by my standards for compilation albums, and as much as I love **B.O.C.**, this album was *very* disappointing. They didn't really feature "all" of their "hits," most of the recordings were live versions and the "flow" of the album as a whole just wasn't there. I think I'd have done better just getting a new CD copy of EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL LIVE. The real odd omission was "Career of Evil," which is not on the disc — yet *was* a 45, *and* a different recording from the LP version (the only case I've found where they did this). Very strange . . . The best part was the extensive liner notes on the history of the band. Oh well.

On *other* music, two recent albums I'd highly recommend (bear in mind personal taste — this is just what I happen to like right about now) are **The Moody Blues'** KEYS OF THE KINGDOM and my current favorite album of 1991, **Electric Light Orchestra's** PART TWO. Oddly enough, **Bev Bevans' the only original member left, but unlike when Jeff Lynne** deserted **The Idle Race,** this group (with three new members, including **Eric Troyer,** who used to do back-up vocals for **Meatloaf**) sounds more inspired than **Jeff Lynne** was on **E.L.O.'s** last couple albums. They also benefit from **Tony Visconti** (reprising his role as strings arranger, like he used to do for **The Move** in the '60s) and **Mik Kaminski,** going crazy on his violin on the song "Heartbreaker" (my pick for should-be-a-single).

Henry R. Kujawa
1202 Everett Street
Camden, NJ 08104

DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY "MOVERS AND SHAKERS"

Dear Julia:

Thank you very much for sending the copies of COMICS INTERVIEW #100. I read with some extra interest the section on the 100 most powerful people in the industry. Being named to such a list is indeed an honor. If I could, however, I'd like to make a couple of suggestions for your next survey. The first would be to limit the scope of possibilities to those who are more directly involved in the comic business. While film producers, and comic-strip artists, do indeed exert some influence, I do not think that it is appropriate to say that they are a power in comics. Their interest in comics is often quite peripheral to their main objectives. If the scope of powerful people was as broad as the survey indicated, then I believe **Ronald Perelman,** not **Terry Stewart,** should have been #1. But I, for one, did not nominate him because his primary occupation does not involve comic books.

My second suggestion is for your selection committee to perhaps explore the power structure of the industry from a perspective other than the responses from your mailing. I was amazed, for example, that **Bruce Bristow,** the head of Direct Sales at DC, was left off the list. He is in a position of great influence. Others I felt should have been on the list include **Gary Colabano,** of the Moondog's retail chain, and **Walter Wang** and **Ron Foreman** of Comics Unlimited Distributing. But, for that matter, I was perplexed in general that only three distributors and two retailers were in the top 100. While I recognize that, due to the dispersed nature of power in retailing and distributing, it is difficult to identify who the "movers and shakers" actually are, I still think that you need to make more effort to find out. Without retailers and distributors the efforts of the dozens of creators you listed would be for naught.

Chuck Rozanski
President, Mile High Comics
2151 W. 56th Ave.
Denver, CO 80221

LAST WORD

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

ATTENTION ARTISTS!!

David:

COMICS INTERVIEW #100 featuring the "Power 100" list really jumped off the stands at me. It's good to get a good sense of the industry. Our non-profit organizaton, Cartoonists Across America, has been extremely busy since we returned from Budapest last August 1990 (when we travel outside the USA, we add "And the World" to our banner). **Rick Veitch** suggested I speak with **Kevin Eastman** while we were both painting a literacy mural for the Hungarian Cartoon Festival, and last December I went up to Tundra to talk to Kevin about doing a full-color book about our dinosaurs.

Kevin is one of the few people I have met who instantly sees the vision of using cartoons to really promote issues like reading and recycling on a global basis. He agreed to fund the first printing of our THEO THE DINOSAUR book project and on Sept. 10, 1991 we had our first book signing/presentation at the National Archives in Washington, DC.

I have enclosed a copy of the THEO THE DINOSAUR book and also a new press release about the continuing Cartoonists Across America (and the World) campaign. One of the really exciting projects we're putting together is our *giant spaceship mural project*. It's a big continuing work in progress that will feature cartoonists from around the world.

We already have over 100 great drawings for this project, including talented comic-book folks like **Kevin Eastman, Bernie Wrightson, John Romita, Sergio Aragones,** etc., and many comic-strip people as well, including **Johnny Hart, Lynn Johnston, Jerry Scott, Dale Messick, Jules Feiffer, Hank Ketcham** — I could go on forever with these names! And more are coming in daily! **Mort Drucker's** wife called me the other day to say that Mort was in!

We have a lot of names and addresses of cartoonists but nowhere near a complete list. I have also put the word out through a number of cartoonist organizations (like CAPS) but it would be great to get a plug in COMICS INTERVIEW about this project and the campaign!

If you could mention to artists that they can write to us for an official porthole circle for the spaceship mural and more info, we'd be happy to send it out ASAP!

We're planning on taking the murals from the National Archives in Washington, DC (where they are now) to France in January for the Angouleme Festival and then to a series of major shows worldwide. The plan is to have 10 murals (about 400 artists) on display in San Francisco for the American Library Association in June, 1992. By the year 2000, we will have 100 murals (that's 700 feet long by 7 feet high!) with about 4,000 artists!

Increasing the number of people who read is a perfect way to increase the comics market, because comics are a great way to get into reading! We have 27 million American adults who cannot read today and millions more who never do it for pleasure in this country — if the comics industry is serious about expanding the market for comics, they need to recognize the potential here. Capital City, Diamond, Tundra and Marvel have all sponsored murals with us. Little by little, the message is getting out!

Phil Yeh
Cartoonists Across America
a non-profit organization
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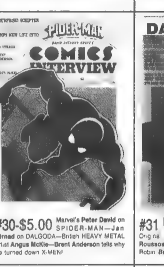

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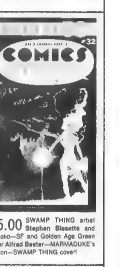

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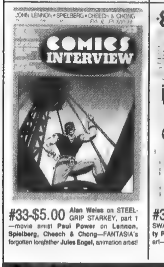

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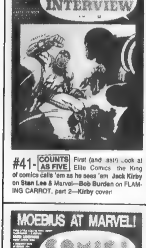

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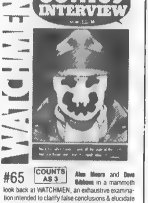

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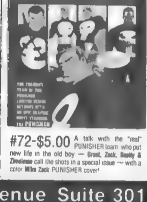

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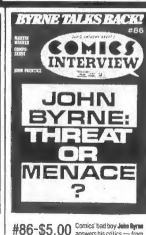

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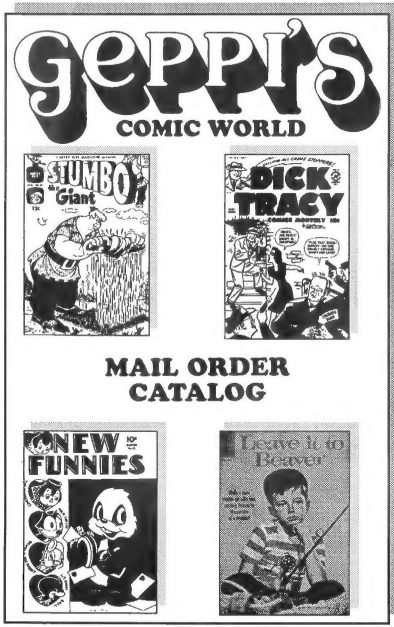

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